

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Don’t Call Names”

Luther Blackmon

Sometimes I have suspicioned that we call names out of spite and vindictiveness. Whoever does that advertises his littleness. But the person who says that we should never call names advertises his ignorance of the true spirit of the New Testament writers. Of course, Luke could have said, “There were a couple in Jerusalem, a man and his wife, who sold some property and misrepresented the amount they gave, and for this the Lord killed them!” But for some reason, he told us exactly who they were. And Peter said, “*Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost...*” I think I know some preachers who are too nice to use the word “*lie*.” That is, unless something is told on them personally. One preacher just said that he had no place in his vocabulary for the word “*liar*.” All I can say is that his vocabulary is not big enough, and is too sweet.

Peter said, “*Judas by transgression fell that he might go to his own place*” (Acts 1:25). Peter indicated that he had some doubt about Judas going to heaven. “What a terrible thing to say. He was judging the poor fellow.” I read an article once which made a feeble attempt to place Judas in a better light than that which is generally cast upon him. However, I doubt that even his champion hopes to meet him “over there.”

Paul tells us that “*Elymas*” was a “*child of the devil*,” an “*enemy of all righteousness*.” He told Elymas that. Can’t you just imagine how mortified some of the sophisticated upper crust would react to that kind of preaching today. I shouldn’t wonder if Paul would get “fired” right off.

John Mark turned back from the work and went not with Paul and Barnabas. Later Paul and Barnabas had such a disagreement over Mark that they split up. Luke says the contention between them was “*sharp*.” I have known many who said they would not for anything let their “unsaved” friends read a paper in which brethren are having “*sharp contention*.” Wonder if they tear out this chapter in Acts? (Acts 15:39). Later on, Paul speaks very favorably of Mark. He redeemed himself, and Paul held no grudges (2 Tim. 4:11).

Apollos preached an imperfect Gospel in Ephesus, “*knowing only the baptism of John*.” Aquila and Priscilla taught him better and he continued his work. Was it necessary to put this in the divine record? Evidently the Holy Spirit thought so. (Acts 18:24-26).

Paul said that Peter acted the part of a hypocrite “*when he was come to Antioch*.” Peter was human and made human mistakes and some of them are recorded for all succeeding generations to read. This one is found in Gal. 2:11-13. The word “*dissimulation*” means hypocrisy.

Paul said, “*Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world*.” He said Hymenaeus and Alexander had made “*shipwreck of the faith*,” that Hymenaeus and Philetus had “*erred...eaching that the resurrection had passed already*.”

There are times when gospel preachers ought to be like the old dentist. A young dentist moved to town, and put up a sign that read: “*Teeth extracted without pain*.” The old dentist put up one that read: “*Teeth extracted regardless of pain*.” Sometimes it is necessary to name the sinner as well as the sins. It hurts, but it should. – [Truth Magazine, January 30, 1975](#). ■

“*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Rom. 16:17-18).

What Is “Good Preaching”?

By Chris Simmons

Wherever you go in the world today, you will find Christians discussing what they consider to be “good preaching” and what characterizes “good preachers.” As with any subject in the world, if left to human wisdom and discretion, the definition of these concepts would be impossible to tie down due to a multitude of various opinions and responses. Fortunately, we do not have to rely upon human wisdom as God has revealed what it is to define “good preaching.” God has set forth that “good preaching” is ...

From the word of God. In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul exhorts Timothy to “**PREACH THE WORD...**” This command eliminates all other sources of authority, information and material from which preachers are to preach from. Preaching is not to be based on human wisdom found in books, magazines and periodicals written by men. Paul said he was sent to “... *preach the gospel*” and not the “... *wisdom of the world*” (Cf., 1 Cor. 1:17-20).

Preaching that proclaims ALL of God’s word. Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:27 that he did not fail to “*declare the whole counsel of God*” (ASV). There is nothing in God’s message to man that is to be left out in our preaching. From the teaching and life of Christ in the gospels, to the doctrine and apostolic examples found in the epistles, to the history and pattern of the early church in Acts, to the examples and instruction found in the Old Testament (Cf., 1 Cor. 10:6, 11), all is to be declared in the preaching that is done. There are brethren today who make the cry for “*balanced preaching*” with the desire that an equal number of “*positive*” and “*negative*” sermons be given. The scriptures do not talk about such ratios in preaching but rather reveal that God’s entire message is to be proclaimed.

Preaching that convicts mankind of sin. From 2 Timothy 4:2, the text goes on to say after “*Preach the word*” that the preacher Timothy needs to be ready to “*reprove*” and “*rebuke*.” To reprove and rebuke is to convict people of sin in their lives. A good example of this is the preaching that was done on the day of Pentecost by the apostle Peter as his sermon convicted the Jews of their sin and elicited the reaction of the people being “*pierced to the heart*” and asking Peter and the rest of the apostles “*Brethren what shall we do?*” (Acts 2:37). Preaching that does not convict the sinner of his sins is not good preaching.

Preaching that edifies. The third facet that Paul encouraged Timothy to include in his preaching in 2 Timothy 4:2 is that of being ready to “*exhort*.” Good preaching will help to build the faith of the brethren to withstand and overcome the trials and temptations found in their lives. In the context of Paul’s discussion with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, he directs them to the proper source for the needed edification and building up when he says in verse 32, “*And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*”

Preaching that equips the saints to work. Paul said in Ephesians 4:11-12 that evangelists were given by God for the purpose of “... *equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.*” Good preaching is going to equip or enable each and every Christian to do the work of teaching, evangelizing, defending our faith and hope and otherwise being able to “*handle accurately the word of truth*” (2 Tim. 2:15). Preaching that just makes the listener feel good about the work that others are doing and does not motivate or equip the one to actually DO the work is not good preaching.

Preaching that addresses the needs of the audience. Paul sets forth the principle that our speech should be “*seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person*” (Col. 4:6). Different congregations of Christians will have different needs. Consider the needs of the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Truly, the brethren at Smyrna who were spiritually rich, did not need the same reproof and discipline that the church at Laodicea needed (Rev. 3:7). Good preaching will reprove and rebuke when necessary and encourage and exhort when appropriate.

Finally, good preaching needs to be appreciated. If you are blessed to hear a preacher who preaches sermons which are from God’s word, who convicts sinners of their sin, who edifies and equips the saints to work and preaches that which we need to hear from the whole of God’s word, then return the blessing and express your thankfulness for such men and the work they do. There are far too many who are willing to tickle the ears of their listeners (Cf., 2 Tim. 4:3) and present a diluted and incomplete message of Christ and His Church for us not to appreciate those who preach the whole counsel of God. – *Fifth Street East church of Christ Bulletin*, March 13, 2005. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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